

Transplanting the Laurel: Mapping France in Du Bellay's Landscapes*

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Joachim Du Bellay's vernacular poetry has often struck readers as, variously, sincere, transparent, modest, modern, personal, original, melancholic, accessible. Certainly, when compared to the myth-laden, erudite and often self-promoting verse of his contemporary Pierre de Ronsard, Du Bellay's poetry – particularly *Les Regrets* with their portrait of a homesick Frenchman disgusted at the corruption of the Italian and papal courts - does invite this kind of reading. Du Bellay himself describes the *Regrets* as 'papiers journaux', a 'secrétaire' of his intimate thoughts (*Regrets* 1). It is tempting, and easy, to take him at his word, to read his sublime descriptions of Anjou as simple, unmediated homesickness, and his satire of Roman society as nothing more than moral indignation. On the other hand, knowledge of the satiric and lyric traditions which Du Bellay is imitating might lead one to conclude that the impression of intimacy is entirely derivative. However, as François Rigolot has shown, to debate whether Du

* I would like to thank the journal's two anonymous reviewers for their generous and constructive comments. In particular, the first reviewer drew my attention to a collection of essays in press (Campagnoli et. al., c. 2007), proceedings from the 2005 Seminari Pasquali in Bologna dedicated to *L'Olive* which looks absolutely germane to my reading of *L'Olive*, particularly the mentioned contributions by G. H. Tucker and G. Polizzi. The book is still forthcoming at the time of writing, and because of deadline constraints I have unfortunately been unable to consult it despite placing a rush order. I refer my subsequent readers to this volume which will undoubtedly become a mandatory reference for readers of *L'Olive* (it is on the *agrégation* reading list for 2008).

Bellay's poetic voice is 'personal' (and therefore original according to a common but questionable association), or pure imitation, is to miss the point. The 'expression personnelle', for Rigolot, comes from what he calls the poet's 'poésie du refus' (492). Du Bellay uses a rhetorical strategy of negations and rejections that differentiates him from the more affirmative Ronsard and is at the core of what readers perceive as his poetic individuality, originality and accessibility. It is more striking and individuating to *not* want than to want, to reject than to desire. To cultivate negativity is to cultivate a sense of intimacy, of shared disappointment. Du Bellay self-authorizes by affirming what and who he is not; by the laws of dialectic, negation is affirmation.

I will take as point of departure Rigolot's 'poésie du refus', and propose here that Du Bellay's negations and refusals are not only ultimately constructive of an individuated poetic identity but also of a particular French identity vehicled through lyric and pastoral landscapes.¹ I focus on his negations of Italy and Petrarch in *L'Olive* and *Les Regrets*, both of which start with grammatical negations and operate a sustained series of negations or transformations of Italian poetry through place: Italy is redescribed as France. The poetic landscapes in both collections are palimpsestic sites of contention in which France is shown as struggling to assert itself over Italy as an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983)² that is productive not only of poetic excellence both individual and collective, but also of what one might call a (proto-) national identity. Du Bellay's personal voice is harnessed to a project of imaginative nation-building that requires as its first step the demarcation of linguistic and cultural territory as specifically *not* situated in Italy. Often, as I shall show, this territory is regional before it is national.

Colette Beaune does not hesitate to define the object of her influential study, which spans the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, as the 'naissance de la nation France' (1985). But the appropriateness of *nation* for pre-modern periods has been contested (Anderson 1983,

¹ I here follow recent scholarship on French identities that focusses on landscapes as 'un support pertinent de l'identité' (Sgard 23). More refinement and discussion of the notion of landscape follows below.

² Anderson's term is becoming somewhat overused as a sound bite in literary criticism, but it has the advantage of underlining the role of the imagination in constructing a sense of belonging. See also Simon Schama for whom 'landscape is the work of the mind' (1995, p. 7). French scholarship on landscape and identities similarly accepts the 'prégnance profonde d'un imaginaire' (Siganos 1999, p. 21.) Also Alain Roger (1996), Anna Cauquelin (1994), and Pierre Sansot (1983).

Gellner 1983, Hobsbawm 1990). To avoid this pitfall, some scholars have made helpful distinctions between nationalism - a post-Enlightenment concept - and, for example, nationhood, or national sentiment or consciousness (Breuilly 1982, Bell 2001, Hampton 2001, Shrank 2004) which can be applied to the early modern period. Claire McEachern usefully suggests that all nations are 'proto-nations', constituted by the process and rhetoric of their becoming (22). I use the term *nation* with all of these provisos in mind, agreeing with John Agnew who writes bluntly, 'Though nationalism is a modern phenomenon, therefore, there is no need to presume that nations or nationalities are likewise' (235). I also suggest that one way of nuancing our understanding of nationhood for the early modern period in particular is to pay due attention to regionalism, not as the binary opposite of nationhood but as its necessary correlative. The ways in which region and nation produce each other are key to my reading of Du Bellay's French landscapes.

The sixteenth century is a critical moment in the history of the French nation and language. French cartography as a self-conscious discipline was born in this period (Drapeyron 1889, Buisseret 1992, Pelletier and Ozanne 1995), on both the regional and national scales. Nicolas de Nicolay, the royal cartographer, was commissioned by Catherine de Medici in 1561 to map each region of France with a view to providing the king with knowledge of the whole kingdom. Military campaigns in Italy were crucial in providing the impetus for French cartography: Charles VIII asked Jacques Signot in about 1485 to map the Alpine passes to Italy (Buisseret 1992). Indeed, the relation to Italy was crucial to how France defined itself in general: war between the two countries dominated the first half of the century, leading to a political and cultural anti-Italianism that itself helped define the parameters of Frenchness (Balsamo 1992, Heller 2003). Internally, power structures were increasingly centralized (many regions were annexed to the crown in the late 15th and 16th centuries), the feudal system was gradually replaced by the courtly, and the dialect of the Ile-de-France gradually superseded other local dialects as what would become standard French.³ Some historians locate the origins of royal absolutism in the sixteenth century (Knecht 1982). Paul Cohen offers

³ See Hampton for a consideration of how the emerging French nation and vernacular literature define and construct each other; but see Cohen (2005) for a qualification to Hampton's thesis that suggests the concept of nation is more fragmented than unified. For the language question, see Brunot (1905-53), and more recently articles by Rouget (2005) and Cohen (2003).

an excellent summary of scholarly quests for the origin of the French nation, and reminds us that such linear narrative of the emergence of a notional nationhood must be complicated with an awareness of the ‘dizzying variety of local cultures, customs and languages within France’ (2005 p. 181). Du Bellay illustrates, even anticipates, this tension between a totalizing script of emerging national sentiment and deeply-entrenched regional identities and loyalties. And it is in his poetic landscapes that such a dialogue is most visibly played out, enabled in both the *Olive* and the *Regrets* by a gesture of rejection of a third other, Italy. Once Italy has been rejected, the question remains of which scale is most appropriate to describe France, and in conscious play with cartographic scale, Du Bellay explores the implications of both regional and national images of France.

In *L’Olive*, published in 1549 with an expanded version a year later, Du Bellay makes Petrarchan poetry French, as JoAnn DellaNeva has shown, by transplanting it ‘onto native French soil’ (DellaNeva 48). My reading of *L’Olive* owes a great deal to DellaNeva’s insightful article, focussing more specifically on the landscape produced by the dialogue between French and Italian poetry. It is French landscape itself that actively overwrites or transforms Petrarchan codes, and this landscape is primarily local. To imagine the space of a great national poetry is to imagine not France as a whole, but rather a region, in this case Du Bellay’s native Anjou. Anjou, and the river Loire in particular, are imagined and described as containing within themselves the material to challenge and rival Italy: they are ideal places of pure native poetry which guarantee fame to poet and country alike. In *Les Regrets* (1558), Du Bellay continues for a while to imagine Anjou as a place of poetic purity and inspiration in which his identity and reputation are grounded. Marc Bizer notes in a reading of the *Regrets* and the *Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise* that ‘Du Bellay’s sense of French identity [...] is not nearly as coherent or well-defined as one would believe [...] both works express considerable ambivalence about a French identity, even a resistance to it. Indeed, the *Regrets* give strongest voice to a provincial, rather than a national identity’ (Bizer 375). Bizer’s acknowledgment of the strength of locally-based identities is welcome; however, this lyric provincial identity dissolves during the course of the *Regrets*, put in a productive but conflicted dialogue with an equally problematic French national identity. In the last few sonnets, it is the nation, incarnated in a lady, that eventually grounds the poet’s search for an appropriate lyric space. This tension between region and nation is again played out through landscape. I propose, in a secondary argument that responds

to Tom Conley's invitation to develop 'perspectives on the relations between literature and cartography' (Conley 1999, p. 23), that Du Bellay uses cartographic distinctions in scale between the local and national in order to reveal this process. The poet cannot ultimately imagine France without Anjou; the nation needs the region within its borders as well as the foreign outside its borders in order to constitute itself. Rather than being antithetical to the nation, the region is 'constitutive, not imitative, of the politics of the nation-state' (Applegate p.1172), or 'la spécificité régionale peut ressortir en tant que partie intégrante de l'identité nationale' (Bowles p. 104).

Du Bellay thus demonstrates the imaginative dialectic that constitutes any sense of place and place-based identity, that all places are 'connected to others in constantly evolving networks which are social, cultural [as well as] natural / environmental' (Cresswell 2004, p. 43). Place here is understood as 'a meaningful location', space interpreted by the socio-cultural (Cresswell p.7).⁴ It is thus more or less synonymous with 'landscape' as understood by cultural geographers such as Denis Cosgrove: a social and cultural relation to land, or 'a dialogue, between changing social and economic structures on the one hand and human visions of a harmonious life within the natural order on the other' (Cosgrove 1999, p. xiv). A landscape, according to this definition, can be either physical or represented; we can thus overcome the opposition between a 'real' history of *land* on the one hand, and an 'imaginary' history of *landscape* on the other. The real and the ideological, land and landscape, are not mutually exclusive, but construct and inform each other.

Du Bellay's French poetic landscapes are a part of the French sense of place even today, widely cited by French and non-French alike to describe place-based nationalist and regionalist sentiment. The work of preference is *Les Regrets*, written while the poet was unhappy in Italy and longing for Anjou and France. In an otherwise scientific discussion of the mild climate of the French region of Anjou, for example, an environmental historian cites Du Bellay's 'la douceur

⁴ Space and place have been significantly theorized by a generation of scholars - social scientists and literary/art critics alike - who argue, influenced by Foucault and Lefebvre, that place is a 'social construct' (Harvey 261), or a 'space invested with meaning in the context of power' (Cresswell 12). Most Anglophone scholars thus reverse Michel de Certeau's 'lieu' and 'espace'; for De Certeau, it is space that is invested with cultural and social meaning: 'l'espace est un lieu pratiqué' (476); however the distinction is the same. For a good summary of this tendency in cultural geography and some of the critical resistance to it, see Cresswell, p. 31 ff.

Angevine' to describe what makes Anjou a propitious region for wine production (le Mené 1982, p. 52). A modern-day Angevin cardinal residing in Rome adopts Du Bellay's pose of homesickness, and sends a message of support for an international colloquium on Du Bellay held in Angers (Poupard 1990). And a recent candidate to the French presidency, François Bayrou, cited the lines known to most French schoolchildren, 'France, mère des arts, des armes et des lois', during a 2006 interview on *Le Franc-parler*.⁵ Du Bellay's lyric poetic descriptions of French place have become commonplace – and common places. His landscapes are strata of memory on which the landscape of France continues to be built, whose 'scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock' (Schama 7).

Indeed, one of the underlying premises of this article is that lyric poetry allows for a particular kind of landscape to be described. The etymologies of the words *topoi* and *loci* themselves are, like Du Bellay's landscapes, both poetic and topographic.⁶ And the particular problem of poetic imitation in the sixteenth century is in part a problem of emplacement. To imitate classical and Italian models is to run up quite literally against the question of place; not only do foreign countries have a stronger poetic tradition, but their pastoral and lyric verses name and describe foreign landscapes as the site of poetic creation itself. An increasingly self-conscious French poetry must therefore not only adopt as its own traditions that are not native, it must also reimagine their landscapes as French. What is more, lyric contains a set of formal, descriptive and thematic conventions which lend themselves well to the writing of a landscape which is enduring because it is beautiful. Love for a woman and praise of her beauty can easily be rewritten as love of land and praise of its beauty in a rhetoric that is specifically gendered. As Philip Schwyzer has argued, the question of beauty is an important category for understanding the self-definition and enduring appeal of nations: 'it is questionable whether [the nation] would have survived so long as an ideology, were it not

⁵ March 17, 2006. This poem has been part of Bayrou's rhetorical arsenal since before he became 'présidentiable': at the closing ceremony of the Conseil national de l'UDF (April 21st, 2001), he referenced it as part of a vision of national greatness. 'Et nous voudrions qu'en Europe, comme autrefois dans le monde, la France redevienne ce qu'elle n'aurait jamais dû cesser d'être et qui depuis du Bellay chante à notre mémoire France mère des arts, des armes et des lois.' Transcript online at http://www.udf.org/discours/fb_280401.html.

⁶ Albert Py, among others, has noted the spatial nature of the terms used for poetic technique (Py 1984, p. 25).

for the fact that nations – all of them – are enduringly, achingly beautiful’ (Schwyzer 2004, p. 100). Schwyzer also gives due attention to the tension between regional and national, appropriate for France although he is discussing early modern England: ‘to recognize the possibility of topographical beauty would be to locate beauty in a part rather than in the whole, and thus to invite the confusion of national and regional loyalties’ (114). Importantly, he also suggests this collective sense of beauty relies heavily on a sense of nostalgia: the nation is beautiful because threatened by loss. The fragility of regional beauty in particular will be an important element of my reading of *Les Regrets*.

I offer readings of landscape first in *L’Olive*, then in *Les Regrets*, concluding with some remarks on how these landscapes respond to the agenda of Du Bellay’s poetic treatise, the *Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise*. Landscape is an ‘espace intertextuel’ (Hallyn 1998, p. 43) in which the problem of imitation is dramatized; the poet must simultaneously imitate and surpass his exemplars. Petrarch is by no means the only lyric influence to be made French, and the influence of Greek and Latin models is undisputed. However, Petrarch looms particularly large, as the laurel tree and the Arno river, in the landscape of the *Olive*, and will be my primary focus here.⁷ The *Olive* marks a first step in a poetics of nationhood, a preliminary and necessary setting of a stage – a landscape - which is not Italy, not Petrarchan, on which a French poet can proclaim, in French, love for a French woman. (I do not consider here the significant question of Du Bellay’s neo-Latin poetry – or Renaissance French-Latin bilingualism in general - and the kinds of complications of notional French poetic identity that it poses: for this, see, e.g., Coleman 1979, Tucker 1994, Bizer 1995.)

Much of the transformation of Italy into France in *L’Olive* is effected through the body: Petrarchan descriptives of the female body

⁷ Petrarch is the *sine quo non* of French lyric poetry in the 16th century, largely because of the influence of his *Rime*. Cécile Alduy (2007) has shown that a collection of ‘Amours’, in the style of the *Rime*, became the 16th century French poet’s rite of passage that one had to perform in order to show off one’s talent as a poet. Petrarch and Laura became objects not only of literary imitation and adulation but also cultural cult figures – Maurice Scève caused a sensation when he claimed to have discovered Laura’s tomb in Lyon (see Sturm-Maddox 2004). For an excellent study of the influence and diffusion of Petrarch in early modern Europe, see Kennedy, and for consideration of the many other Italian vernacular influences on French Renaissance poetry, see DellaNeva 1999 and 2004.

are easily transferable to landscape, and particularly appropriate for a feminised 'la France'. The metamorphosis of landscape into woman, or vice versa, of course goes back to classical tradition, in particular to Ovid. In Petrarch's descriptions of Laura, there is a permeability between Laura's body and the landscape; Du Bellay transposes this onto French landscapes whose local topographies share descriptive conventions with the tradition of praise of the loved lady's beautiful body. The conventions of love lyric lend themselves particularly well to a (re)imagining of nation. The process is analogous to what Cecelia Tichi has called 'national embodiment', that is, the projection of human forms and natural spaces onto each other, 'as a strategic process or program of natural-ization (*sic*) by which the nation is defined and redefined in critical historical moments' (12). Tom Conley describes something similar with respect to Du Bellay's peer, Pierre de Ronsard, noting that 'the poet becomes the erotic cartographer of a nation whose future remains in question' (33).

In *Les Regrets*, Du Bellay oscillates between national and regional scales of description in a movement that is ultimately productive of both. (I use *scale* in a consciously cartographic sense, and will explain the articulation between poetry and cartography before my reading of *Les Regrets*.) The ideal space of Anjou, which in the first part of the collection is preferred to the too-large space of France, dissipates upon the poet's return from Rome. Du Bellay thus reveals that such idealization is only possible at a distance and when the uncomfortable facts of history and reality are evaded. In so doing, he rewrites one of the perennial themes of pastoral since Virgil, which is the tension between ideal and reality, imagination and history, 'entre la conscience amère de la réalité et l'application à se créer un refuge idéal dans la nature sereine et bienveillante' (Monga 60). The enduring beauty of Du Bellay's landscapes comes in part from this melancholic sense that they are fragile and threatened by 'the problem of human history' which they seek to contain or evade (Quint 48); they indicate their own status as constructs, dependent on the imagination. Nevertheless, his France is a 'space of hope' (Harvey 2000), a landscape where poetic excellence, secure regional identities, and national greatness coexist. At a time when transformed cartographic practice was mapping France and its regions for the first time, poetry too puts 'France on the map' (Conley 1999). The sustained praise, at the end of *Les Regrets*, of Marguerite is also praise of France, the nation rather than the region, and in returning to the conventional *topoi* of lyric – praise of a beautiful lady,

acknowledgement of his dependence on a patron – Du Bellay shows how the nation, as well as the region, is an act of the imagination.

1. Anjou in *L'Olive* (1549)

The first words of the first line of the first sonnet of Joachim Du Bellay's first published collection, *L'Olive*, are a negation: 'Je ne quiers pas la fameuse couronne / Saint ornement du Dieu au chef doré' (*Olive* 1, 1-2). The object of negation, the crown of Apollo, is of course the laurel wreath, symbol of poetic fame since the ancient Greeks. More particularly, the laurel wreath or *lauro* is the symbol and homonym of Petrarch's love-object, Laura, and of his poetic renown. Du Bellay's rejection of this powerful symbol of classical and Italian poetic renown is surprising. In 1549 when *L'Olive* was published, sonnet sequences in French were unheard of, although the following decade would see them flourish. One might expect Du Bellay to make a more forceful case, and claim more powerful symbols, for his own poetic success, particularly as *L'Olive* was published in the same year as his polemical *Deffence et illustration*. Both texts 'share a common concern: the development of the French vernacular as an excellent medium of poetic expression' (DellaNeva 1987, p. 40). The *Deffence* promotes the notion that French has little native poetic tradition to speak of, and that the remedy for this is judicious imitation of classical and Italian models by poets such as himself.⁸ More specifically, Du Bellay tells us in his preface to the expanded version of *L'Olive* that he wrote the *Deffence* partly as an explanation to his readers of his poetry; he clearly felt that the 'nouveau-té' of a sonnet sequence in French emulating Italians, Romans and Greeks needed some justification.⁹ Like Ronsard and the other poets of the Pléiade, Du Bellay is self-consciously presenting his vernacular poetry as a kind of workshop in which the excellence of French would be forged and defended, one day to equal Latin, Greek and Italian in its richness and variety. In the *Deffence*, he explicitly minimises the importance of his immediate vernacular predecessors in the forging of this French poetic tradition, and is particularly

⁸ The fraught relationship between the *Deffence* and its classical and Italian models which are simultaneously to be emulated and surpassed, both exemplars and rivals, has been well studied, e.g. by Margaret Ferguson (1983). See Melehy, 2000, p. 501-2, for a good summary of critical reactions to Du Bellay's defensive posture.

⁹ See Gray (1978) and DellaNeva (1987) for the particular relationship between the *Deffence* and the *Olive*.

disdainful of the native French medieval and late medieval forms such as the rondeau and ballade. If French poetry is to be considered great by posterity, he implies, it will be because of the immediate and urgent intercession of a small élite self-nominated coterie which will render it illustrious.

If Du Bellay is rejecting, among other vegetal symbols, the laurel wreath, Laura, and Petrarch, what is he to claim for himself? The answer lies in the landscape, and starts with an olive tree, which any reader initiated in the Petrarchan tree-for-woman substitution will recognize is also a woman: the homonymous Olive de Sévigné, the poet's cousin, the purported object of his desire. The continuation of the first sonnet describes, elliptically, the substitution of the laurel by the olive:

Celuy qui est d'Athenes honoré,
Seul je le veulx, et le Ciel me l'ordonne.
[...]
Orne mon chef, donne moy hardiesse
De te chanter, qui espere te rendre
Egal un jour au Laurier immortel. (*Olive* 1, 7-8, 12-14)

Nevertheless, this first sonnet leaves the poet with a geographical problem: he may have challenged Petrarch, dethroning the laurel in favour of the olive tree, but he is still firmly in classical Greece and Italy. The olive, gift of Athene, is of course the symbol of Athens. And the poet crowned with olive branches is found in Horace's ode 'Laudabunt alii' (*Odes* 1, 1, 7), itself a passing over of the beauty of Greek landscapes in favour of Roman. Du Bellay may have transformed the laurel wreath into an olive branch, but he has yet to plant it in French soil.

He achieves this in the third sonnet, which he starts with an address to the 'Loire fameux'. Du Bellay's patriation of Petrarch will take place in and through local topography.

Loire fameux, qui ta petite source
Enfles de maintz gros fleuves et ruyseaux,
Et qui de loing coules tes cleres eux
En l'Ocean d'une assez vive course. (*Olive* 3, 1-4)

The address to the Loire is surprising in a collection of love-sonnets, where one might expect an address to a tree in this tradition of the metonymic substitution of the tree for the lady, but hardly to a

river.¹⁰ The Loire was an important commercial artery in sixteenth-century France, and the site of aristocratic building projects, but social and economic history is not what Du Bellay means. The poetic project of praise of a woman is transformed into the praise of his local river. The landscape of lyric love and praise is now unmistakably French, a large river running its entire course from spring to sea through France. Given the importance of the image of the source as generative poetic inspiration (Quint 1983), it seems significant that the Loire has its source in France itself.

Du Bellay loses no time, in the following quatrain, in claiming the Loire as a more beautiful river than the Italian Po, which flows through the Veneto where Petrarch lived the last part of his life.

Ton chef royal hardiment bien hault pousse
Et apparoy entre tous les plus beaux
Comme un thareau sur les menus troupeaux
Quoy que le Pau envieux s'en courrousse. (*Olive* 3, 5-8)

The Loire river is a competitor in an international competition of fame in which the Angevin landscape trumps the Venetian, and Du Bellay trumps Petrarch. The renown of place and poetry are tied up together in a close-knitted poetic metonymy that almost eclipses the original subject of praise: the woman, Olive. (Olive is only named twice in the whole collection, in sonnets 24 and 76, while the Loire is named specifically eight times, and evoked on many more occasions in formulae such as 'mon fleuve'.) The fame of Petrarch's Laura will not be answered by Du Bellay's Olive so much as by his river. As we have noted, an olive tree – symbol of Athens – is not necessarily French. But the Loire is entirely French, from source to end. What is more, Du Bellay eclipses the historical Petrarch's significant presence in France by situating the latter firmly in Italy rather than in Avignon, where Petrarch had spent part of his life and, more importantly, where he claimed to have met Laura in 1327. France, rather than Italy, is in fact the site of Petrarch's lyric love story, but for Du Bellay to admit this would lessen a lot of the work performed by his dialogue between Italian and French landscapes.

¹⁰ Praise of rivers will become a lyric tradition in its own right in France in the following decades. See, for example, Pierre Le Loyer's first Idyll, 'Le Loir Angevin' (1579), in which the poet adds his praise of the Loir to that of Pierre de Ronsard before him, making it a mutual glorification project. In 1549, however, Du Bellay's fluvial encomium is rather novel.

Despite the specific naming of French landscapes, there is also a sustained mythic dimension to Du Bellay's geography, already signalled in this sonnet by the capitalization of 'Océan' in the fourth line of the first quatrain. It is the landscape of myth that dominates the rest of the sonnet. The poet commands the river to command a troop of Naiads to praise his lady, who is still not named:

Commande doncq' aux gentiles Naiades
Sortir dehors leurs beaux palais humides
Avecques toy, leur fleuve paternel,

Pour saluer de joyeuses aubades
Celle qui t'a, et tes filles liquides
Déifié de ce bruyt eternal. (*Olive* 3, 9-14)

Du Bellay is populating the Angevin landscape with the water nymphs of Greek and Ovidian tradition, claiming France as a legitimate site for such poetry. This is only the third sonnet of the collection, and by its conclusion, Du Bellay has claimed that his Angevin river is famous, that it is more deserving of praise than Petrarch's river, that it is inhabited by the denizens of classical poetry who have relocated to France, and that both river and Naiads praise his lady who has made them, in turn, famous. In the rest of the collection, the river becomes such an important poetic vehicle that it is scarcely necessary to name it (after a certain point, Du Bellay starts to write 'fleuve heureux' or 'mon fleuve').

Sonnet 60 highlights particularly well the equivalency between river and fame, and the kind of poetic nation-building, through landscape, which I am identifying. In this sonnet, Du Bellay is asking his French peer Ronsard to leave his river, the Loir, to come and increase the fame of the Loire.

Divin Ronsard, qui de l'arc à sept cordes
Tiras premier au but de la *memoire*
Les traictz aelez de la Françoisie *gloire*,
Que sur ton luc haultement tu accordes.

Fameux harpeur et prince de nos odes,
Laisse ton Loir haultain de ta *victoire*
Et vien sonner au rivage de Loire
De tes chansons les plus nouvelles modes.

Enfonce l'arc du vieil Thebain archer,
Où nul que toy ne sceut onq' encocher
Des doctes Soeurs les sajettes divines.

Porte pour moy parmy le ciel des Gaulles
Le saint honneur des nymphs Angevines,
Trop pesant faix pour mes foibles epaules. (*Olive* 60, my emphasis)

We find the obvious rhyme of *Loire* with *gloire*, and also with *memoire* and *victoire*; in the tercets, the word *Angevines* rhymes with *divines*. So although Du Bellay is adopting a posture of humility towards Ronsardian greatness, he writes into his end-rhymes a direct equivalence between Angevin geography and the vocabulary of poetic renown that - formally at least - excludes Ronsard. It is true that Ronsard's river 'Loir haultain' (l. 6) is indistinguishable, in the spoken word, from Du Bellay's river; however, it is both excluded from the privileged end-rhyme position and is replaced in the tercets by the word 'Angevines' that cannot be mistaken for any part of Ronsard's Touraine. This sonnet illustrates succinctly the simultaneous collaboration and rivalry between Ronsard and Du Bellay, and how it plays out in landscape as a productive tension between regionalism and nationalism. The praise of Anjou is part of Du Bellay's particular bid for poetic renown, but it is also harnessed as part of the *collective* construction of a national poetry, as when Ronsard is asked to trumpet Angevin greatness in the 'ciel des Gaulles' (l. 12) - to a pan-regional, national readership. The invocation of Ronsard thus has a double function: simultaneously to act as foil for Du Bellay's regional and poetic specificity, and to serve as an ally in a collectively-imagined construction of a lyric France. And behind this pose of humility lurks a third interlocutor, Petrarch, whose sonnet 'Vergognando talor' expresses his poetic incapacity faced with the greatness of his subject matter (*Rime* 20). While Petrarch concludes with the familiar inexpressibility topos, Du Bellay trumps Petrarch by making an appeal to another French poet, to a poetic collectivity that Petrarch did - or could - not imagine.

Gradually, Petrarchan desire is deflected from a female love-object onto Du Bellay's Angevin landscape, particularly the Loire, which is thus eroticized. In the last sonnet of the first edition of *L'Olive*, which had only 59 sonnets, we see that the lady's body has disappeared entirely and has become the river. Du Bellay uses the adjective 'fameux' to refer to a confluence of two rivers, and not to his lady, who is again only evoked vaguely. After the first quatrain in which he compares himself to Leander, he continues:

Dessoubz mes chants voudront (possible) apprendre
 Maint bois sacré et maint antre sauvage,
 Non gueres loing de ce fameux rivage
 Ou Meine va dedans Loyre se rendre.

Puis descendant en la sainte forest
 Ou maint amant à l'umbrage encor'est
 Iray chanter au bord oblivieux. (*Olive* 59, 5-11)

Du Bellay presents a mythological poetic landscape which is out of time and place, then telescopes by a sort of zoom-lens effect into a precise chorographic reference to the place where the Maine river joins the Loire, and then zooms out again to the land of nymphs and lover-poets. The confluence of Maine and Loire is Lavoir, at Ruseboucq (now Bouchemaine), where Du Bellay visited his cousin Olive de Sévigné. It is not even the name of the place that he gives to stand in for the lady, but rather a verbal picture of a chorographical feature, the joining of two rivers.

The expanded edition of *L'Olive* continues to substitute French landscape for the Petrarchan lady. In the median sonnet of the expanded edition of *L'Olive*, sonnet 71, we find in the conventional *blason* of the fragmented woman a gradual metamorphosis of her body into the Loire valley, with the rhyming of *Loire* and *ivoire* adding a new turn to this overused descriptive:

Ce cler vermeil, ce vermeil unissant
 Oeillez et lyz freschement enfantez,
 Ces deux beaux rancz de perles, bien plantez,
 Et tout ce rond en deux pars finissant,
 Ce val d'albastre, et ces couteaux d'ivoire
 Qui vont ainsi comme les flolz de Loire
 Au lent soupir d'un zephire adoulci. (*Olive* 71, 5-11)

The median position is a privileged one in a sonnet sequence, particularly if one thinks in terms of Conley's 'graphic unconscious' ordering the space of the text (Conley 1992); the middle of the book, translated into visual terms, would be the area on which the gaze would first fall. What is going on in this sonnet is, then, particularly significant: another overwriting of Italy and Petrarchan conceits by French place. The direct intertextual reference is Ariosto's portrait of Alcina in the *Orlando Furioso*, itself derivative of Petrarchism, and much used by Pléiade poets to describe female beauty (DellaNeva 1987, p. 44; Weber 1955, pp. 265-8). What may appear on first

reading to be a derivative imitation of Italian models is in fact subtly transformed and claimed as French by Du Bellay's Angevin landscape. The lengthy list of similes – teeth as pearls, alabaster curves – culminates in a comparison between the lady's ivory flanks and the waves of the Loire, with the key words *ivoire* and *Loire* in the rhyme position.

Petrarch's *canzone* 'Di pensier in pensier' (*Rime* 129) is a primary model for this fluid movement between female body and landscape, and Du Bellay modifies the Petrarchan model in important ways. Petrarch describes the hallucinatory power of the lover-poet's imagination to create and recreate images of Laura's body within the landscape through which he wanders. Yet there is a strange fluidity of selfhood, an exchangeability of lover and lady, and an indeterminacy of landscape, in Petrarch's poem, which is replaced in Du Bellay by a unidirectional movement from lady out to landscape. From the first line of Petrarch's poem, landscape is described primarily as a mental state, thoughts as mountains, mountains as thoughts: 'Di pensier in pensier, di monte in monte / mi guida Amor' [From thought to thought, from mountain to mountain, Love guides me] (*Rime* 129, translation by Durling 1976, p. 264). With every step, he tells his readers, a new thought of Laura is born. He sees Laura in stones, in the water, on the grass, in a beech tree, in a cloud. The landscape he traverses functions as metaphor for the pain of burning Love. The last two stanzas resolve the movement between interior and exterior landscape as a problem of distance, the distance separating the poet in Italy from Laura in France. Space is described in physical terms, and the mental landscape of suffering is projected outwards to become the Alps, the barrier separating the poet from his love. The space beyond the Alps, Vaucluse in France, is described as the place of poetic and amorous fulfillment, an Arcadia of contentment, a place where the poet can assume again a physical existence rather than remaining the disembodied intelligence roaming an wild terrain of mental images. What is more, the French landscape is transformed by the usual homonyms (l'aura, laureto) into Laura herself:

Canzone, oltre quell'alpe,
 là dove il ciel è più sereno et lieto,
 mi rivedrai sovr'un ruscel corrente
 ove l'aura si sente
 d'un fresco et odorifero laureto;
 ivi è 'l mio cor et quella che 'l m'invola:
 qui veder poi l'immagine mia sola. (*Rime* 129)

[Song, beyond those Alps, where the sky is more clear and happy, you shall see me again beside a running stream, where the breeze from a fresh and fragrant laurel can be felt: there is my heart, and she who steals it from me: here you can see only my image.] (Durling 1976, p. 267)

France is figured as a bucolic landscape and woman's presence from which Petrarch's poet is excluded. Du Bellay recaptures and redirects Petrarch's desire for France, grounding it firmly in Anjou: he, Du Bellay, is the Petrarch that Petrarch himself was not. He trumps his Italian rival by being a lover-poet *in* France. And whereas Petrarch's landscape is evoked to describe a sense of alienation from the self and distance from the lover,¹¹ Du Bellay's is evoked to ground and resolve this lyric longing.

This transformation of local topography into an Arcadian landscape in which conventional love-lyric *topoi* can be included, affords Du Bellay a means of placing – that is, territorializing – his poetic identity and enterprise in a way that Petrarch did not have. In a direct imitation of Petrarch's famous invitation to his readers to come and admire Laura, 'Chi vuol veder', Du Bellay again redirects the readers' gaze towards Anjou. Petrarch's sonnet invites his readers to contemplate the apogee of Nature's creation, Laura, before her beauty fades (*Rime* 248).¹² The poem becomes a complex meditation on time, death, beauty, writing and reading. Du Bellay, however, in sonnet 62, invites his readers to admire a tree, an invitation that quickly becomes an invitation to look at his river, effecting another transformation of Petrarchan lyric through and into French landscape.

Qui voudra voir le plus precieux arbre,
Que l'orient ou le midy avoue,
Vienne, où mon fleuve en ses ondes se joue:
Il y verra l'or, l'ivoire, et le marbre. (*Olive* 62, 1-4)

Du Bellay transforms the Italian lyric similes of gold (Laura's hair), ivory (teeth) and marble (skin) into features not of a French woman but of French landscape, a similar transformation of lyric

¹¹ But see Tucker (2003) for the important qualification that Petrarch's exiliary posture is, finally, liberating rather than punishing, in that it becomes the very vehicle of his poetic identity.

¹² For a detailed reading of Du Bellay's sonnet in relation to Petrarch's, see DellaNeve 1987.

convention to the metamorphosis of the alabaster sides of a woman into smooth river banks in the median sonnet.

This sonnet then moves from Petrarch to a panoply of poets, classical and French, with whom he claims at least equality, if not superiority. The establishing of poetic reputation is again given in geographic terms, and in particular through rivers, which function antonomastically to represent other lyric poets.

Il y verra les perles, le cinabre
 Et le crystal: et dira que je loue
 Un digne object de Florence et Mantoue,
 De Smyrne encor', de Thebes et Calbre
 Encor' dira que la Touvre et la Seine¹³
 Avec' la Saone arriveroient a peine
 A la moitié d'un si divin ouvrage:
 Ni cestuy là qui naguere a fait lire
 En letters d'or grave sur son rivage
 Le vieil honneur de l'une et l'autre lire¹⁴ (*Olive* 5-14)

Poetic rivalry is not described in fluvial terms until Du Bellay arrives at the French poets. Petrarch, Virgil, Homer, Pindar and Horace are invoked by naming their regions of origin. Saint-Gelais, Héroët, Scève and Ronsard are named by their rivers. France's poetry is here described in cartographic terms, a map in which the Angevin river is drawn large, and other major rivers drawn in peripherally in order to illustrate the position of the Loire relative to them. He has dismissed Laura and the laurel tree, replacing them with Angevin landmarks, and the negation of the opening sonnet (I do not desire the laurel) has become affirmation and invitation (let the reader come to my river bank and gaze on my tree).

Despite the presence, in this cartographic jostling for position, of Du Bellay's French peers and of classical forebears alike, Petrarch remains the primary interlocutor. Specifically, Du Bellay refers to Petrarch's sonnet 'Parrà forse', which directly precedes 'Chi vuol veder':

Parrà forse ad alcun che 'n lodar quella
 ch'i' adoro in terra, errante sia 'l mio stile
 facendo lei sovr'ogni altra gentile,

¹³ Florence – Petrarch; Mantoua – Virgil; Smyrna – Homer; Thebes – Pindar; Calabria – Horace; Touvre – Saint-Gelais; Sine – Héroët; Saône – Scève.

¹⁴ Ronsard, who had just published his *Odes*.

santa, saggia, leggiadra, onesta et bella.
 A me par il contrario, et temo ch'elle
 non abbia a schifo il mio dir troppo umile,
 degna d'assai più alto et più sottile;
 et chi nol crede venga egli a vedella,
 sì dirà ben: "Quello ove questi aspira
 è cosa da stancare Atene, Arpino,
 Mantova et Smirna, et l'una et l'altra lira.
 Lingua mortale al suo stato divino
 giunger non pote; Amor la spinge et tira
 non per elezion ma per destino."

[It will perhaps seem to someone that, in my praise of her whom I adore on earth, my style errs in making her noble beyond all others, holy, wise, charming, chaste and beautiful. I believe the opposite, and I am afraid she is offended by my too humble words, since she is worthy [*degnà*] of much higher and finer ones: and who does not believe me, let him come to see her. Then he will say: What this man aspires to would exhaust Athens, Arpinum, *Mantua*, and *Smyrna*, and *the one and the other lyre*.¹⁵ Mortal tongue cannot reach her divine state; Love drives and draws his tongue, not by choice but by destiny.] (*Rime* 247, transl. Durling, my emphasis)

Du Bellay's sonnet is in fact a conflation of Petrarch's two sonnets, 'Chi vuol veder' and 'Parrà forse'. Du Bellay grounds in Anjou this quest for a worthy object of lyric praise, and rewrites Petrarch's comparison of himself with classical poets as a competition in which he himself triumphs. Petrarchan geography, in this case, is a spatialization of what poetry cannot do: no-one could adequately describe Laura. Geography in Du Bellay's sonnet is an affirmation of what Du Bellay *can* do since he has found his 'worthy object',¹⁶ and it is expanded to include a poetic map of France itself in which Du Bellay and the Loire river triumph over other French rivers and their poets. Du Bellay's negation of Petrarch has become not only affirmation but a game of one-upmanship.

The Loire river flows through the entire collection of *L'Olive*, the 'digne objet' of his lyric, and a landmark in his poetic map that individuates and distinguishes him. In sonnet 105, addressed to Scève,

¹⁵ Athens – Demosthenes; Arpinum – Cicero; Mantua – Virgil; Smyrna – Homer; the two lyres – Greek and Latin lyric.

¹⁶ See DellaNeva 1987, p. 41, for an insightful discussion of the significance of the phrase 'digne objet' as applied to Du Bellay's lyric project.

the Loire takes its place in a competition of poetic achievement with the Saône (Scève) and the Arno (Petrarch):

L'Arne superbe adore sur sa rive
Du saint Laurier la branche toujours vive,
Et ta Delie enfle ta Saone lente.

Mon Loire aussi, demy dieu pas mes vers,
Bruslé d'amour etent les braz ouvers
Au tue heureux, qu'à ses rives je plante. (*Olive* 105, 9-14)

A sonnet that starts off as an encomium of Scève, describing him and his poetry in mythic-classical terms, turns back in the tercets to Angevin specificity, and to an entirely different image of creation.¹⁷ While Scève is the Horatian swan flying across the known world, Du Bellay is an Angevin gardener, planting the olive branch on the banks of his river.

2. Anjou and France in *Les Regrets* (1558)

It is clear that Du Bellay's poetic place in *L'Olive* is local and regional more than it is national. To 'map' France poetically is to do so regionally; it seems harder to include the space of France as a whole within the thematic and formal constraints of lyric. This differentiation, and the relationship, between the national and the regional becomes a significant theme in Du Bellay's later collection of sonnets, *Les Regrets*, published nine years after the first edition of *L'Olive*. To understand the creation of poetic place in the later collection, as well as its relationship to the Anjou of the earlier poetry, it is helpful to go beyond the analogy of mapping to consider what was going on in cartography during this period (for book-length studies of the articulations between literature and cartography, see Conley 1996 and Sauret 2004).¹⁸ The sixteenth century was the inaugural period of 'modern' geography in France; although the

¹⁷ I do not consider Scève specifically as intertext here: for a reading of Scève as intertext in the *Olive*, see DellaNeva 1988.

¹⁸ Poets and cartographers often knew each other and even collaborated in 16th-century France: one finds short poems on some maps from the period: Jean Fayen's map of the Limousin has a short poem by Joachim Blanchon, and Jean Jolivet's 1545 map of the Berry has an 'Au Lecteur' in verse by his friend the poet Jacques Thiboust. Gilles Boileau de Bouillon was both a poet and a mapmaker. Such lived relationships show that the poetry-cartography encounter in this period goes well beyond metaphor.

Theatrum of Bouguereau (1594) and the ‘grands atlas’ of the seventeenth century are better-known today, many of these contain maps originally drafted in the sixteenth century.¹⁹ Renaissance map-makers, following the recently rediscovered Ptolemy, used projection and scale. The different scales were codified quite distinctly as cosmography, geography and chorography (Broc 1980, Lestringant 1993). The latter is the technique of mapping small, distinct regions, usually framed by natural boundaries such as the curve of a river, or the space between two hills. For Frank Lestringant, chorography is allied more closely with literary descriptiveness than is geography: the former measuring the quality of a space, and the latter the quantity. Chorography and literature share a qualitative dimension:

la carte de chorographie [...] enregistre en une sorte de mimésis partielle et minutieuse la qualité de l'espace terrestre. La cartographie rejoint à ce moment le paysage comme genre pictural ou littéraire, dans la mesure où [...] la chorographie borne son champ idéalement à ce que l'oeil peut embrasser dans l'instant. (Lestringant 1993, p. 10)

The definition of the chorographic space as that which the human eye can take in with one glance, finds an interesting parallel in a 16th century text on mapping: Pierre Apian's *La cosmographie* (1553), a French translation of his original Latin text. Apian writes that chorography ‘considère seulement aucuns lieux ou places particulières en soy-mesmes.. comme si le peintre vouloit contrefaire un seul oeil, ou une oreille’. The extent of the region to be described by the chorographer is, by analogic extension, the space of an eye. As for the goal of geography, Apian continues, it ‘constituée au regard de toute la rondeur de la terre, à l'exemple de ceulx qui veulent entierement pindre la teste d'une personne avec ses proportions’ (Apian p. 4, in Lestringant p. 53).

Chorography is the mapping of the micro-region, privileging not the main geological structures which underlie landmarks, but the landmarks themselves. It is the mapping of fragments, the cartographical equivalent of the painting of an eye or an ear, detached from their setting, the head. The literary version of these drawings of fragments would be, arguably, Petrarchan lyric. Nancy Vickers (1981) has shown how the body of the female is divided and scattered in Petrarchan lyric by the poet's insistence on the particular over the whole. Specific body parts are chosen for inclusion and elaboration in

¹⁹ For example, a diocesan map by Ogier Macé, published ca. 1539, is found in both Bouguereau and Ortelius.

different poems, in a series of synecdoches which however never allows the reader to see the whole woman. Just as it is easier to isolate an eye or ear from the face than a cheek, for example, so certain features in the physiognomy of the land lend themselves more to circumscription than others. Du Bellay's lyric Anjou is divided up into constituent parts such as the Loire, variously praised in different poems and which exist in a metonymic, suggestive relationship with the whole of Anjou.

If the genre of localised chorographic description is lyric, then the genre of the larger geographical perspective might be said to be epic. Lestringant's distinction between the qualitative description of chorography, and the quantitative description of geography, is a difference of scale and perspective. Apian uses the word 'regard' (in the previous quote) to describe the geographer's limits - the geographer, like the chorographer, has to *look*, only he looks further. Like chorography, geographical representation is subjective and selective, and can also be likened to literary discourse, to 'quelque chose d'écrit' (Lestringant 1990, p. 10): Apian observes that geography is a science 'prouffitable à ceulx qui desirent scavoit les histoires et gestes des Princes'. The alliance of geography with 'gestes' - the territorial expansion and conquests of the nobility - suggests a generic parallel between geography and epic.

This is not to say that the only perspective lyric offers on space is a chorographical one, for we also find geographical and even cosmological spaces in Du Bellay. Indeed, his poetic journey from the *Olive* to the *Regrets*, and the journey to and from Rome within the *Regrets*, can be seen as a search for appropriate boundaries and descriptive scales for poetry. That is, the anxieties produced in poetry by an emerging national discourse, and by the resultant challenge to deep-seated regional modes of self-identification, are presented by Du Bellay as poetic anxieties about cartographic scale. National space is almost always too large a scale to be circumscribed comfortably by his lyrics; it is more through his identification with Anjou and his transformation of certain features of that region into poetic space that he can construct an identity and imagine his own poetic success. Anjou - for a while - grounds the poet linguistically and generically: it can be fitted into his project both in the *Olive* and in the *Regrets* more comfortably than can the whole of France. In the first case, Anjou, and particularly the Loire River, becomes a more certain guarantee of the lover-poet's subsequent fame than the eponymous lady, Olive. In the *Regrets*, the image Du Bellay creates of the miserable exile (itself an appropriation of a Latin tradition), and the poetic identity this allows

him to inhabit (Tucker 2003), is achieved largely through his images of Anjou while he is in Rome. This idealised Anjou, which is also that of *L'Olive*, breaks up upon his return, however, when he finds it is not the 'plaisant séjour' it seemed while he was away, and the poet is forced to turn elsewhere for a fitting subject of lyric idealization. The change is understood in the context of how Du Bellay presents these two different works: while both perform a kind of rejection of Italy, the *Olive* participates in a dialogue with the established norms of the Petrarchan love-sonnet, whereas the *Regrets* announce a new subject matter and departure for the lyric project - an uneasy, messy and miserable day-to-day life in Rome. The poetic space of Anjou eventually dissolves, and becomes instead the focus for the same kind of anxieties Du Bellay finds in Rome. Regionalism is exposed as precisely a poetic discourse, and Du Bellay turns back to the nationalist imperative, finally finding an adequate subject in the traditional object of lyric praise, a woman, who also happens to incarnate the nation.

Du Bellay establishes the local, small-scale parameters of the start of the *Regrets* in the first sonnet, where he telescopes from the 'architecture' of the sky, in the first quatrain, into the 'accidents divers' of 'ce lieu' in the second - a shift from universal to particular, or in cartographic terms, from cosmography to chorography: 'Je ne veulx point fouiller au seing de la nature / [...] / Mais suivant de ce lieu les accidents divers'.²⁰ He is rejecting a specific metaphysical kind of poetry - that of Pontus de Tyard, for example, whom he teases in sonnet 155, or perhaps he was also thinking of some of Ronsard's hymns - and drawing the boundaries of his own poetry, a poetry of localised perspective.

Like the *Olive*, then, the *Regrets* start with a rejection. But the kind of redemptive chorography we see in *L'Olive*, where Angevin topography enables Du Bellay to replant Petrarchan lyric in French soil and to escape from a sense of non-belonging, is not possible in Rome. Rome, where the poet is supremely disillusioned (MacPhail 1990, p. 39-94; Deguy 1973), is a space that resists any kind of mapping. The Roman landscape is a confusing clutter of ruins,

²⁰ Note the semantic richness of the word 'accidents', which a direct translation would not capture. The word in the sixteenth century had a philosophical connotation which is largely lost today; it was understood in opposition to the concept of 'universal', and thus meant anything particular, specific, local. It also has a sense which is preserved in the modern French 'accidenté' referring to terrain; this sense is that of 'landmarks', 'things which stand out'.

emptied of natural landmarks and horizons, and even these ruins exist in a vague place between myth and history, past and present, reality and ghosts. The first spatial imagery used to describe Rome (and even then it is metaphorical) is that of the plain, a space which can only be delimited by surrounding landmarks - a plain is understood as a space between prominent natural boundaries, and there are none here. This is in the preliminary 'A M. D'Avanson': 'J'estois à Rome / [...] / Ainsi voit-on celuy qui sur la plaine / Pique le boeuf' (*Regrets*, Adresse, 5, 9-10). The plain reappears in the famous sonnet 9, 'France, mère des arts', where the poet represents himself in Italy as wandering 'parmy la plaine' - a vague, unmapped space.

But France itself is similarly hard to represent. Even in this sonnet, part of the French national imaginary for generations, France as a whole escapes mapping.

France, mère des arts, des armes et des lois,
 Tu m'as nourry long temps du lait de ta mamelle:
 Ores comme un aigneau qui sa nourrice appelle
 Je remplis de ton nom les antres et les bois. (*Regrets* 9, 1-4)

The name of France, a designation of a specific geographical area, falls nowhere when he cries it aloud, it sent back to him by Echo. France, it seems, cannot be named productively, it is an empty appellation without grounding, and the poet who speaks it fails to find comfort. His attempt at mapping has failed; he cannot include even an imagined, conjured French space within the sonnet.²¹

It will only be in the evocation of Anjou that Du Bellay is able to imagine a defined, delimited space with certain landmarks, which fits into the space of lyric poetry. In one of the better-known homesickness sonnets, 19, his initial longing for France which found no rhetorical resolution in 'France mère des arts', finds an outlet through focussing on a smaller space - Anjou.

Cependant que tu dis ta Cassandre divine,
 Les louanges du Roy, et l'heritier d'Hector,
 Et ce Montmorency, nostre François Nestor,
 Et que de sa faveur Henry t'estime digne:

Je me pourmene seul sur la rive Latine,

²¹ For a sustained discussion on how space works to construct the poet's relationship with his country in this sonnet, see Hampton (2001), pp. 171-177.

La France regretant, et regretant encor
 Mes antiques amis, mon plus riche tresor,
 Et le plaisant sejour de ma terre Angevine.

Je regrete les bois, et les champs blondissans,
 Les vignes, les jardins, et les prez verdissans,
 Que mon fleuve traverse: icy pour recompense
 Ne voiant que l'orgueil de ces monceaux pierreux,
 Où me tient attaché d'un espoir malheureux,
 Ce que possede moins celui qui plus y pense. (*Regrets* 19)

The sonnet can be read as a quest for an appropriate lyric subject. The first tercet addresses Ronsard, and the subjects of Ronsard's lyric praise, subjects and discourses from which Du Bellay represents himself as excluded. His malaise draws significantly on the Petrarchan language of longing (Hampton 2001, Tucker 2003), as if to be in Italy were inevitably to become Petrarch exiled from the love and even the presence of Laura. The rest of the sonnet is created by, and about, the voice of the exile, wandering alone on the 'rive Latine', and the wandering itself becomes the lyric subject, settling – albeit briefly – in Anjou. He passes from an evocation of 'La France' to that of 'le plaisant sejour de ma terre Angevine', and it is this regional, chorographic limit to space which allows him to present a poetic map of the area. Anjou thus imagined is the ideal poetic contrast to Rome, which as we have seen resists any kind of spatial ordering: the landmarks of Anjou are arranged into an orderly space of pastoral ideal, and each feature stands in an antonomastic relationship with the whole Anjou. Rome on the other hand presents no such boundaries, nor any landmarks which can be taken as a figure for the whole: all the poet sees is 'L'orgueil de ces monceaux pierreux'. Anjou becomes a world of symbol, of ideal lyric convention, a neat well-ordered space set against a chaotic world of commerce and corruption. It seems to repatriate the poet *qua* lyric poet, conjuring away the dispersion and banality of the Roman experience.

However, this will not last for long. One irony of the posture of the lyric poet who is homesick for France, and for a particular region of France already identified with a lyric love-object, is that it turns Du Bellay back into Petrarch, at least the Petrarch of 'Di pensier in pensier'. To articulate such longing for France from Italy, Du Bellay must adopt the pose of the lover separated from his lady in France by the mountains. Du Bellay, as I have argued, rewrote this posture in *L'Olive* by a deliberate celebration of being in France, in the place Petrarch longed to be. Here Du Bellay is, like Petrarch, in Italy and

longing for France. French lyric regionalism only works to trump Petrarch if it is expressed from within France. Articulated from Italy, it turns him into Petrarch.²²

Anjou must therefore disperse as a lyric space. As the 'digne objet' of lyric that Du Bellay seeks through the whole sequence, it is untenable. Du Bellay turns away from idealization of a localized French space from Italy that turns him into Petrarch (and that necessitates borrowing from Petrarchan language of longing), and in order *not* to be Petrarch any more, he introduces a new kind of discourse about Anjou into the sequence. This dissipation of Anjou as lyrically-ordered space, and its redefinition as a space ordered more by Du Bellay's own voice, can be seen in Du Bellay's use of the most basic linguistic mark of identification: the possessive.

Du Bellay applies two kinds of possessive to Anjou, or to its landmarks, in the *Regrets*, which we could categorize as subjective and objective. The subjective possessive is that which expresses, not actual possession, but an emotional identification with a place. Such is the case in sonnet 25:

Malheureux l'an, le mois, le jour, l'heure et le point,
Et malheureuse soit la flateuse esperance,
Quand pour venir icy j'abandonnay la France,
La France, et mon Anjou, dont le désir me poingt. (*Regrets* 25, 1-4)

The passage from *la* France to *mon* Anjou marks an increased subjective identification. It is understood that Du Bellay does not actually own the whole Anjou, and that the possessive is used as conceit and not as real. Such possession is the stuff of lyric. The close echo of Petrarch's sonnet 61, 'Benedetto sia'l giorno e'l mese et l'anno', in which Petrarch remembers the first encounter with 'mia donna', places Du Bellay's whole sonnet in the context of the conventions of love-lyric, replacing desire for the lady with desire for Anjou.

Objective possession signals a relationship between speaker and object which is more than poetic conceit. In sonnet 19, discussed

²² Timothy Hampton proposes that Du Bellay in the sonnet 'France, mère des arts', by citing Petrarch's description of Italy in his poem 'Ad Italiam', sets himself up as the 'anti-Petrarch, as the figure who cannot return home' (2001, p. 172). This particular intertextual point is well taken. However, I would propose that the attempt to present himself as the anti-Petrarch of 'Ad Italiam' (which certainly does subtend the *Regrets*) ironically and necessarily turns him into the Petrarch of the *Canzoniere*.

above, we see 'mon fleuve' (which is subjective - the river only belongs to him in the land of lyric), and 'ma terre Angevine', which points to an objective reality, that of economic and social fact. The Du Bellay family did own territory, the estate of La Turmelière in the Angevin province of Liré.²³ The actual fact of possession seems to do something to poetic discourse; it introduces a set of uncomfortable social and economic anxieties into lyric space. The two kinds of possession in this sonnet announce the rupture between ideal and corrupted Anjou.

Thus the limited, chorographic space of Anjou is not, in the *Regrets*, a successful metonymy for ideal lyric. As soon as it is actualized by a reference to its status as real land, it can no longer be a lyric space. Instead, in sonnet 31, it seems to become epic space, the uncomfortable, too-large space of geography that cannot fit into lyric.

Heureux qui, comme Ulysse, a fait un beau voyage,
 Ou comme cestuy là qui conquist la toison
 Et puis est retourné, plein d'usage et raison
 Vivre entre ses parents le reste de son age!

Quand revoiray-je, hélas, de mon petit village
 Fumer la cheminée, et en quelle saison
 Revoiray-je le clos de ma pauvre maison
 Qui m'est une province, et beaucoup d'avantage?

Plus me plaist le sejour qu'ont basti mes ayeaux,
 Que des palais Romains le front audaceux:
 Plus que le marbre dur me plaist l'ardoise fine,

Plus mon Loyre Gaulois que le Tybre Latin
 Plus mon petit Lyré que le mont Palatin,
 Et plus que l'air marin la douceur Angevine. (*Regrets* 31)

²³ The estate was on his mother's side. The family settled there in 1506, when Du Bellay's father married Renée Chabot, daughter of Christophe Chabot, the seigneur of Liré. The estate was a source of worry to the family: Du Bellay's older brother René had married Madeleine de Malestroict, from Oudon. When Madeleine's brothers were both condemned to death for murder, Oudon was confiscated. In 1532, René sold two parcels of family land in order to buy Oudon back on the urging of his wife. This acquisition gained him the hostility of the entire Malestroict family, leading to endless trials which exhausted the Du Bellay family's finances. Details from Gagneux (1982), p. 34.

The return to Anjou is imagined in epic-mythic terms, referring to Ulysses and to Jason. Such figurations of the epic return are commonplace in sixteenth-century writings; it is not my intention to explore the full implications of Du Bellay's self-styling as Ulysses or Jason, amply discussed by others (Tucker 1982 and Lestringant 1990), but rather to consider how this pose works spatially, what is the poetic persona's relationship to land. However, the references to epic personae carry a note of foreboding that has been unpacked only by Tucker: neither Ulysses nor Jason returned home 'heureux', but rather were engaged in struggles to assert their claim to kingship - an epic parallel to the Du Bellay family's struggle against the Malestroict family. Conflicts between important families are hardly lyric matter. The smoking chimney in the following quatrain is a conventional epic image of exile and strife: Ulysses expresses the same desire in the *Odyssey*, before setting off for years of wanderings (*Odyssey* 1: 57-9), and Aeneas and company see smoking chimneys before they land on the island of the Strophades, where they encounter the Harpies (*Aeneid*, 3:206). The sense that this will be an unhappy return is accented by the possessives 'mon village' and 'ma pauvre maison', which, as suggested above, introduce an economic reality that will in fact make his return troublesome. The adjective 'pauvre' in this context brings into the space of the sonnet the financial hardship brought upon the Du Bellays by the Oudon trials. The synechdochic relationship between the 'pauvre maison' and the 'province' - his house *is* his province - suggests that his whole experience of Liré will be inflected by these troubles.

In the three tercets, Du Bellay sets up a series of polar oppositions between his land and Rome. On either side, equivalent landmarks are compared - buildings, stone, rivers, hills, and climate. He is simultaneously mapping the chorography of Rome and of Anjou. The geographical space between the points under comparison, from France to Italy and back again, set up the distance from which it is possible to imagine Anjou as an ideal space (Bellenger 1975, pp. 201-211), and apply lyric, subjective possessives to its landmarks: 'mon Loyre', 'mon petit Lyré'. In fact, subjective preference is the only thing which distinguishes Rome from Anjou: the whole comparison hinges on 'plus me plaict'. He makes no claim to an inherent superiority for Anjou. He is illustrating the very process by which the poet builds his land into a perfect lyric space: by creating distance from which the land can be sublimated. The concluding words of the sonnet, 'la douceur Angevine', have been much discussed (Bellenger 1975, p. 90 ff; Bots 1970, p. 93ff). In an excellent discussion of the taxonomy of

douceur in Du Bellay, Louis Terreaux (1990) points out the many ways in which it is primarily a literary, not a climatic, term. In particular, *douceur* points to the pastoral mode. Homesickness for Anjou is shown to be an entirely literary type of experience, a lyric longing in the Petrarchan tradition. Ironically, then, when Du Bellay is appearing to claim his individual and poetic identity through description of his region of origin, he is also arguably at his most derivative. It is this realisation that his homesickness cannot make him into the anti-Petrarch that drives Du Bellay to a more unusual and personal representation of Anjou, a territorial representation which is also a staking-out of his own poetic territory or voice. This voice comes from the articulation of actual presence in Anjou, and Anjou's status as real, not literary, space. As we shall see in sonnet 130, this new kind of Anjou leads to 'milles soucys mordants', a peculiarly novel kind of literary and lyric experience that Du Bellay will claim as his own.

From Du Bellay's return onwards, Anjou will cease to be a perfect pastoral space, and will become the focus of economic concerns that preclude lyric description. There are no more idyllic tableaux of Anjou, only references to the worry caused by land ownership. As noted above, Anjou is not evoked directly after sonnet 31. The only indication that he has actually returned there is in sonnet 130, where he observes that he has not left behind the vice of Rome; in fact, he is still Roman.

Et je pensois aussi ce que pensoit Ulysse,
 Qu'il n'estoit rien plus doux que voir encor' un jour
 Fumer sa cheminée, et apres long sejour
 Se retrouver au sein de sa terre nourrice.
 [...]
 Las mais apres l'ennuy de si longue saison,
 Mille souciz mordants je trouve en ma maison,
 Qui me rongent le coeur sans espoir d'allegance.
 Adieu doncques (Dorat) je suis encor' Romain (*Regrets* 130, 1-4, 9-12).

The figure of Ulysses reappears, as well as the smoking chimney, and the reader is hardly surprised that the return to the 'terre nourrice' is disappointing: the poet finds the same kind of 'ennuy' there as he did in Rome, a reference to the family's legal and financial troubles.

Anjou then is left out of the rest of the collection. It can no longer be written about as the lyric counterpart to corrupt Rome, and the attempt at chorographic description is abandoned. Nor is there is

anywhere in the whole of France, it seems, that can be described as lyric landscape. The return into France is through Lyon, described in sonnet 137, addressed to Scève. The sonnet starts with a reference to Aeneas returning from the underworld, with whom the poet compares himself. But the classical reference is quickly overwritten by a detailed, circumstantial, and surprising description of Lyonnais territory.

Scève, je me trouvay comme le filz d'Anchise
Entrant dans l'Elysee, et sortant des enfers,
Quand après tant de monts de neige tous couvers
Je vis ce beau Lyon, Lyon que tant je prise.

Son estroicte longueur, que la Sone divise,
Nourrit mil artisans, et peuples tous divers:
Et n'en desplaie à Londres, à Venise, et Anvers,
Car Lyon n'est pas moindre en fait de marchandise.

Je m'estonnay d'y voir passer tant de couriers,
D'y voir tant de banquiers, d'imprimeurs, d'armeuries,
Plus dru que l'on ne void les fleurs par les prairies.

Mais je m'estonnay plus de la force des ponts,
Desus lesquelz on passé, allant au dela les monts
Tant de belles maisons, et tant de metairies. (*Regrets* 137)

Firstly, he attempts to map Lyon with a lyric chorographical description: 'ce beau Lyon [...] que la Sone divise'. But chorography is soon replaced by commercial discourse; the rivalry between different places associated with certain poets is replaced here with a purely economic rivalry; Lyon turns just as much trade as London, Venice and Anvers. Indeed, the place appears very much as he described Rome, the lyrically unmappable place, with flourishing commercial activity, and in the background the bridges and mountains which lead back to Italy. Attempts to describe the city as a space of natural lyric beauty are thwarted by references to human activity, in a strange conjunction of natural and manmade which pushes the boundaries of landscape traditionally represented by lyric. The only attempt to describe Lyon as lyric landscape is in a somewhat awkward metaphor, in the first tercet, in which entrepreneurs are strewn along the streets as thick as meadow flowers. The strange comparison of businessmen with flowers on a prairie is accented by the fact that the rhyme word for 'prairies', and the last word of the sonnet, is 'metairies', or shareholdings. This is a reference to contemporary

farming practice; sharecropping or *métayage* was gradually substituted, in sixteenth-century France, for traditional methods of agriculture, increasing urban investment in the land (Salmon 1975, pp. 15, 213 ff). Thus in the rhyme scheme itself we have a direct contrast between a landscape which seems taken straight from pastorally inspired lyric, a flower-strewn prairie, and an altogether different view of land – exploitable terrain divided into units of production and used for economic gain through a contemporary farming method. The reader of this sonnet is transported from the Aeneid to the present day, and the transformation from ancient to modern takes place through the description of landscape.

As this last example shows, even the collapse of the mythologised Anjou and France gives a new dimension to French lyric poetry, and allows Du Bellay finally to free himself from the voice of Petrarchan longing. To inherited conventional lyric landscapes, Du Bellay has added the language of economics and actual land ownership. The presence of classical and Italian authorities is overwritten by a landscape that is undeniably French and of its time. He started in *L'Olive* by applying the language of Petrarchan love lyric to landscape instead, to his local region of France. The Petrarchan woman becomes Du Bellay's land in visible metamorphoses. In *Les Regrets*, sublimated Anjou is initially turned into an imagined rival space to Rome and Italy: Du Bellay is challenging Latin exemplarity literally with Angevin landscapes. But he then abandons Angevin pastoralism for a particular kind of experience of land and space that allows him to escape from Petrarch's shadow. The dissolution of ideal Anjou on his return, when he realizes that home is no different to Rome, continues the challenge to inherited tradition by inflecting its landscapes with contemporary economic discourse (Aeneas journeying through a bustling commercial district in Lyon). Du Bellay's regional identity may have been problematised, but a national French poetry is still imaginable, and indeed France emerges from the *Regrets* as the poetic victor in the rivalry.

In the final sonnets of the *Regrets*, the poet turns away from any kind of chorographical local identification to refound his poetic project again in a woman, Marguerite de France, daughter of François I, sister of Henri II. He has come full circle from *L'Olive*, where he turned from a woman to a river: here, he turns back from place to woman, where the woman is emblematic of France as a whole. The encomiastic tone of the last sonnets has bothered some critics who see in it too radical a departure from the quotidian tone of the rest of the sequence (Screech 1974, p.29). I propose, on the contrary, that in the

final sonnets Du Bellay finds a ‘digne objet’ of lyric praise that allows him to conclude the sequence in a way that establishes not only himself, but France as a whole, as a rival site of production of lyric poetry to Italy.

The change in perspective is made explicit, and in a very visual, geographic way, in sonnet 171, in which the poet tells his muse and his ‘souci’ to leave Anjou for a higher subject:

Muse, qui autrefois chantas la verde olive,
Empenne tes deux flancs d’une plume nouvelle,
Et te guindant au ciel avecques plus haulte aelle,
Vole où est d’Apollon la belle plante vive.

Laisse, mon cher souci, la paternelle rive,
Et portant desormais une charge plus belle,
Adore ce hault nom, dont la gloire immortelle
De nostre pole artic’ à l’autre pole arrive.

Loue l’esprit divin, le courage indontable,
La courtoise douceur, la bonté charitable,
Qui soustient la grandeur et la gloire de France.

Et dy: Ceste princesse et si grande et si bonne
Porte dessus son chef de France la couronne:
Mais dy cela si hault, qu’on l’entende à Florence. (*Regrets* 171)

The winged flight to the skies, a cliché of lyric since Horace, permits a cosmographic perspective which is associated, in a related philosophical tradition – the dream of Scipio at the end of Cicero’s *De republica*, for example - with wisdom (Cosgrove 2001). The turning away from locality to the name of Marguerite operates a shift in perspective from the chorographic to the cosmographic, then the geographic. His name is now bound up with that of Marguerite, and thus with that of France as a whole. Marguerite, as subject of inspiration, allows for the reappearance of geography (that is, nationalism) within the space of his poems: her name will travel from one pole to the other. The space of the whole world can be condensed in his poetry through her. His praise of her, which he hopes will be heard in Florence, thus also allows him to reconcile the comparison between France and Italy, a comparison which failed, as we saw, when Anjou was the point of comparison: the space between the two countries is bridged by her name, and France comes out the victor. The space of France finds an appropriate lyric medium through Marguerite. Among her many praiseworthy qualities we find

'douceur'. transferred from the Angevin 'douceur Angevine' to a lady, the original lyric object, but who stands as synecdoche for France as a whole.

The failure of *Regrets* 9, 'France mère des arts', to map France - the name of France coming back to him in a lonely echo - is resolved in *Regrets* 189 in a direct echo of a line from the former sonnet:

Je remplis de ton nom les antres et les bois (*Regrets* 9, 4)
Je remplis d'un beau nom ce grand espace vide (*Regrets* 189, 8)

In this latter sonnet, the 'vide' is filled by the name of Marguerite; the poet is no longer a lost lamb on the plains, but a swan in the skies, embracing the whole world with this new, larger perspective offered: 'Comme un cygne nouveau me conduit vers les cieux' (line 6.). The lyric chorography that individuated Du Bellay in the earlier *L'Olive*, while establishing a personal poetic identity, challenged the representation of France as a whole and the very nature of the Pléiade's collective poetic project. At the end of *Les Regrets*, the local and the individual are absorbed by the greater space of France and the image of a community of poets. He addresses a sequence of twelve sonnets (178-189) to a different living poet in turn,²⁴ including many who were or who had been considered members of the Pléiade. The poets addressed also have in common that they enjoyed the favour of Marguerite, reinforcing the sense of a chosen, closed community. The only non-French poet to be addressed in one of these sonnets (*Regrets* 187) is Buchanan, a Scottish intellectual who frequented the courts of Francis I and Henri II. He is however clearly described as an exception, almost a miracle; Du Bellay attributes awesome powers to the Muses for having bred such talent on savage Scottish soil. The implication is of course that France is a more natural breeding ground for poets than Scotland, and thus even the inclusion of a foreign land in this sonnet sequence adds ultimately to the credit of France.

The sequence of personalized sonnets creates a national community of poets which is then figured as a blessed flock in the penultimate sonnet, needing the guidance and the patronage of Marguerite if France is once again to be the mother of the arts, a pastoral land where native poetry flourishes, the most beautiful place in the known oikumene. Du Bellay has returned to the agenda of the *Deffence*, the construction on French soil of a national poetics; the

²⁴ Melin de Saint-Gelais, Jean Dorat, Etienne Jodelle, Pierre de Ronsard, Gournay, Jean de Morel, Bouju, Forget, Philibert Duval, Buchanan, Pierre de Pascal, Peletier Du Mans.

individual poet wandering lonely on the plain in the beginning of the *Regrets* has joined up with the rest of the flock and is now part of a group of poets seeking protection together. The moment is not triumphant, however, but uncertain, a moment when the future of France's poetry is in the balance. All depends on the efforts of the poets, supported by sufficient royal patronage. The penultimate sonnet echoes indirectly the call to arms of the *Deffence*:

Helicon est tary, Parnasse est une plaine,
 Les lauriers sont seichez, et France autrefois plaine
 De l'esprit d'Apollon, ne l'est plus que de Mars.
 Phoebus s'enfuit de nous, et l'antique ignorance
 Sous la faveur de Mars retourne encore en France
 Si Pallas ne defend les lettres et les arts. (*Regrets* 190, 9-14)

The homonymous 'plaine' meaning both *full* and *plain*, *wasteland* accentuates the essential contrast; images of plenty opposed to images of emptiness, hope opposed to fear. Although the Wars of Religion do not officially start until 1562, tension between religious factions has already erupted into sectarian violence; Henri II himself overtly favoured the persecution of Huguenots. Du Bellay is urgently calling poets and patrons to fight another fight under the emblem of Apollo rather than Mars, to fight with pens rather than with swords. The landscape of lyric has become a battleground for the future of French poetry and, in a way, of France itself. If the nation is not to be ravaged by civil war, the lyric battleground must replace the real one. Soldiers must become poets, royal favour must be turned away from military endeavours to literary ones. By the end of *Les Regrets*, poetry is the saviour of the nation; the imagining of France as idealized poetic garden has social as well as literary implications. Lyric landscape becomes the remedy to a war-torn one, a place where not only the questions of poetry itself are addressed, but also the most pressing questions of his time. Du Bellay's 'refus' of Petrarch and Italy, his appropriation of them for France, has taken on particular urgency.

Conclusion

Hassan Melehy has noted the spatial dimension to Du Bellay's celebrated treatise, the *Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise* (1549), whose goal is 'a question not only of ultimately transforming French into a literary language on a par with Greek and Latin, as he would have it, but even more so of inventing a space that the modern language would both frame and occupy' (2000, p. 501). The imitation

of foreign poetic models is presented throughout the text as agricultural labour: the French poet must graft and transplant foreign poetry in French soil, where he must tend to and cultivate it with care. The agricultural metaphor is particularly developed in chapter 3 of book 1: just as the Romans carefully cultivated their borrowings from Greek with the result that they appeared no longer ‘adoptifs, mais naturels’, so too must the French poet-farmer ensure that his language ‘sortira de terre, et s’eslevera’. Hassan sees the fraught dialogue with antiquity as opening up the space of French poetry, culture and modernity itself. I hope to have shown how this is played out in Du Bellay’s poetic landscapes through a dialogue with – and negation of – Italy and Petrarch, and how, in representing both Anjou and France through cartographic shifts in scale, the poet shows that both region and nation are mutually constructed as imagined communities.

Du Bellay’s landscapes are also gendered – the praise of a woman becoming praise of a feminized landscape – and this too is anticipated by the language of the *Deffence*. At the end of the treatise, the process of transplanting foreign poetry into France is specifically gendered. France is described as almost virginal soil, with vast stretches of fertile land propitious for the generation of native literature: ‘la France [...] est de long intervalle à preferer à l’Italie [...] Je ne parleray icy de la temperie de l’air, fertilité de la terre [...] Je ne conteray tant de grosses rivieres, tant de belles forestz’. And his conclusion to the work elaborates an extended metaphor of a French flotilla’s movement through the seas of poetry, through foreign seas towards the breasts of the object of desire, France.

Nous avons echappé du milieu des Grecz, et par les scadrons romains
penetré jusques au seing de la tant désirée France. [...] La donq
Francoys, marchez couraigeusement vers cete superbe cité romaine: et
des serves depouilles d’elle [...] ornez voz temples et autelz.
(*Deffence* 2, 12)

Male French poets are then exhorted to continue to Greece, where they are to sow their Gallic seed: ‘Donnez en cete Grece menteresse, et y semez encor’ un coup la fameuse nation des Gallogrecz.’ Given such a semantic and metaphorical cluster – fertility, *la France*, *la terre* – it is not surprising that the conceptual space of such cultural gestation should be a reimagining of a female body. France is presented as a fertile woman ready for implantation, the terrain on which native poetic planting and harvesting will take place.

Something happens in the sixteenth century to the way in which French place(s) are imagined and described. France and its regions are

mapped cartographically in relation to each other, and in relation to Italy, for the first time. But the 'naissance de la nation France' is as much cultural and literary as it is geopolitical: France is also mapped poetically. The work of imagining and representing the space(s) of France, both region and emerging nation, in the sixteenth century is done as much by lyric as by cartography. No other genre – prose dialogue, epic, theater – presents French landscape in such an engaged and intentional way, nor, surprisingly, do the plastic arts. Du Bellay's vernacular lyric can help us understand why poetry should have lent itself so particularly well to these enduring images of landscape. By staging of the problems of imitation, particularly imitation of the conventions of Petrarch's *Rime* which must be overwritten in order to affirm a native tradition, Du Bellay's landscapes invent and affirm the space of French poetry and the emerging nation.

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